

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A caterpillar traction apparatus comprising first and second extensive traction members, the first traction member being driven by and entrained around first and second rotatable members and the second traction member being driven by and entrained around third and fourth rotatable members, each of the rotatable members being addressed by drive means such that the first and third rotatable members can be driven at a first speed and the second and fourth rotatable members can be driven at a second speed, the first speed not being equal to the second speed.

2. (Original) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the difference between the first speed and the second speed is between 1% and 10%.

3. (Original) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the difference between the first speed and the second speed is 4%.

4. (Previously Presented) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second speed is less than the first speed.

5. (Original) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the second speed is greater than the first speed.

6. (Previously Presented) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 1, in which the first and second extensible traction members are extended in a direction significantly parallel to their direction of motion.

7. (Previously Presented) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 1, in which the first and second extensible traction members are extended in a direction significantly perpendicular to their direction of motion.

8. (Previously Presented) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first and second extensible traction members are capable of sustained extensions of 10% or greater.

9. (Original) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the extensible traction members comprise rubber.

10. (Original) A caterpillar traction apparatus according to claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the extensible traction members comprise a compressible polymer.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a linear member ~~within~~ using a mechanical caterpillar apparatus ~~according to any of claims 1 to 4 and 6 to 9, the apparatus comprising first and second extensible traction members, the method comprising the steps of:~~

entraining and driving the first traction member around first and second rotatable members;

entraining and driving the second traction member around third and fourth rotatable members;

driving each of the rotatable members using drive means such that the first and third rotatable members are driven at a first speed and the second and fourth rotatable members are driven at a second speed, the first speed not being equal to the second speed, wherein the processing of the linear member is effected by the difference between the first speed and the second speed.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a linear member according to claim 4 11, wherein the difference between the first speed and the second speed compresses linearly the linear member.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a ~~linear~~ linear member according to claim 4 11, wherein the difference between the first speed and the second speed extends linearly the linear member.